

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10 remain in this application.

The Office Action requires election of an invention from the following:
Group I including claims 1-4; Group II including claims 5-7; and Group III including claims 8 and 10.

Applicant elects Group I, including claims 1-4.

The present application is a National Stage PCT Application filed under 35 USC §371. Accordingly, election of an invention is not required where a unity of invention exists among the claims. PCT Rules 13.1 and 13.2 are to be followed in making a unity of invention determination without regard to restriction practice in applications filed under 35 USC §111.

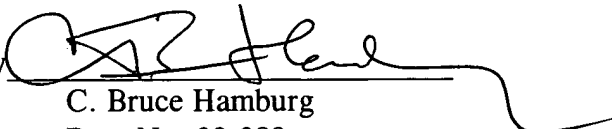
The Office Action is distinguishing between a process and an apparatus for carrying out the process. Rule 13 permits the combination of claims including “in addition to an independent claim for a given process, an independent claim for an apparatus or means specifically designed for carrying out said process.” MPEP §1850 “*Combinations of Different Categories of Claims.*” It is further stated “the expression specifically designed does not imply that the apparatus or means could not be used for carrying out another process, nor that the process could not be carried on using an alternative apparatus or means.” *Id.* Specifically, claims 1-7 clearly fall within the above criteria and should be examined at one time without a restriction imposed. The independent claims 1 and 5 are directed to a method for joining stacked plate-shape objects and an apparatus for joining of stacked plate shaped objects, respectively.

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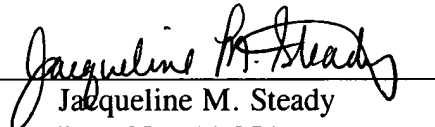
Applicant respectfully requests a five month extension of time for responding to the Office Action. Please charge the fee of \$2010.00 for the extension of time to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

In light of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in proper form for allowance of all claims and notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,
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